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ABSTRACT

Junior Achievement (JA) offers high school student its traditional evening program, in which business advisors help students run their own mini-businesses. In 1980, JA offered this program to mentally, emotionally, and physically disabled students aged 16-21. The special needs component operates an in-class program where students run companies selling stock, building and selling products, and learning about business. The Anoka-Hennepin (Minnesota) education system adopted the program to meet district educational goals. The program has four objectives: developing an understanding of employers' expectations; providing handicapped students with "real" work environments; improving the self-concept of students by providing paid work; and promoting appropriate work habits and behaviors. Referrals are made by coordinators at three high schools. Each student is evaluated quarterly. Functioning levels are determined for 17 general areas. (This document contains the following attachments: "A New Option for the Handicapped" newsletter article; a JA student evaluation form; and "Flexible Programs Create Opportunities for Special Students" article, from "Partners" (winter 1991). (NLA)

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Using Junior Achievement

as a

Vocational Option

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Youth with Special Needs

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JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT/SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Since 1949, Junior Achievement (J.A.) has offered its traditional Evening Program to high school students. In this program, business advisers, sponsored financially by their place-of-employment, help students run their own mini-businesses.

In 1980, J.A. began to offer this program to a special group of students: the mentally, physically, and emotionally disabled.

This Special Needs Program operates as an in-class program, usually run by the school teacher with J.A. staff support and business adviser assistance. Students actually run their own companies selling stock, building and selling products, and learning about business.

The Anoka-Hennepin education system reviewed Junior Achievement's Special Needs classes in other areas of Minnesota, and decided to adopt the program as a means of meeting District educational goals.

ANOKA-HENNEPIN J.A. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

1. To develop a realistic understanding of the expectations of employers in the work place.

2. To provide students with varying handicaps, the opportunity to experience a work environment which closely approximates the real world.

3. To develop and foster the self-concepts of students by providing meaningful paid work activities.

4. To promote the development of each student's appropriate work habits and behaviors.

TARGET POPULATIONS

The following groups of individuals are served by the Anoka Special Needs Junior Achievement Program: (ages 16-21)

Trainable Mentally Handicapped (TMH)

Educably Mentally Handicapped (EMH)

Learning Disabled (LD)

Emotionally and Behaviorally Disordered (E/BD)

Alternative High School Students/ Disadvantaged/ High-Risk Youth.

DESCRIPTION

The Special Needs Junior Achievement Company began operating in September of 1988. A variety of wood products, finished and unfinished, form the company's primary product line. The program is staffed by one Special Ed./Vocational instructor and one para-professional, and runs for six hours per day. "Employees" work for periods of 1 to 2.5 hours depending on scheduling and vocational needs. Students are paid for their work, an incentive that many teachers are looking for when weighing "in house" vocational programs.

REFERRALS
Referrals to the J.A. Program are made by the Work Experience Handicapped Coordinators at each of our three high schools.

Some of the students have been placed in community work sites and through those informal evaluations, we observed consistencies in weak work habits. Continued placements in the community were not proving to be the most appropriate environments to improve or strengthen those identified weaknesses.

Other students referred to the J.A. Program come with no experience at work sites and in those cases, J.A. is used as an informal evaluation site to determine strengths and weaknesses and may assist Work Coordinators in future work site placements.

EVALUATION
A quarterly evaluation is written on each student. Functioning levels are determined for the following general areas: (copy to WE-H Coordinator and parents)

1) attendance
2) use of time clock/card
3) punctuality
4) working with supervisor
5) working with co-workers
6) requesting assistance
7) following directions
8) accepting criticism
9) adapting to change
10) handling materials appropriately
11) attending to task
12) retaining work skills
13) maintaining work area
14) grooming
15) meeting production standards
16) following company rules
17) keeping track of time

SPONSORSHIP
Junior Achievement acquires a corporate/business sponsor for your program. The sponsor provides the $800 per semester for program consultation/material contribution costs that J.A. requires. The $800 per semester allows you to be under the Junior Achievement Umbrella. Corporate sponsors may also be able to provide you with volunteers for classroom assistance.

CONTACTS
To determine in which Junior Achievement franchise area you are located, it is best to contact the National office:

Junior Achievement, Inc.
45 East Clubhouse Dr.
Colorado Springs, Co. 80906
Telephone: (719) 540-8000

Since Minnesota is one of the only states with so many programs tailored to fit the needs of Special Education Vocational Programming, you may also want to contact:

Doris Pagelkopf
Junior Achievement of the Upper Midwest
3939 W. 69th St.
Minneapolis, MN 55435
Telephone: (612) 927-8354

I can be contacted :

Patty Schoff
Junior Achievement Coordinator
Anoka Technical College
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MVASNP Newsletter Winter '89

A NEW OPTION FOR THE HANDICAPPED

For years, high school students across Minnesota have participated in Junior Achievement (JA) programs as an extra curricular activity. But recently, a number of schools have begun to utilize "in-school" JA programs as a vocational option for handicapped students.

JA is designed to provide high school aged individuals with the opportunity to develop and operate their own company. The students select and/or devise their own product lines, set prices, and sell merchandise or services. "Company employees", as they refer to themselves, are paid a minimum of $.40 per hour and receive commissions for their sales. Employees can also purchase stock in their company. Currently there are programs serving handicapped individuals in Anoka Hennepin, Bridgeview, Carver-Scott, Emerson, Lexington, Lincoln Hills, Northfield and Roosevelt schools.

Rachel Thurber, paraprofessional, supervising Deanna Arndt, Tom Ottum and Storefront President John LaBeau.

The newest addition to the JA family is located at the Anoka Technical Institute and is part of the Vocational Planning Center of Anoka Hennepin School District #11 (ALC, 1355 West Main Street, Anoka, MN 55303, (612) 421-6370; Instructor: Patty Schoff). The company, Storefront, is a 5 day/week, 2 1/2 hour/day program which currently serves 11 TMH, EMH, and EBD students. The district's Special Needs Vocational Program provides funding for a para-professional, and Peg Swartz of U. S. West volunteers her time and expertise 3 hours per week. In less than 3 months of operation, Storefront has developed a diverse product line and spawned numerous success stories. The current list of Storefront products includes the following: apple wreaths and ornaments, painted and stenciled pottery (with or without candy or plants), recycling aluminum cans, notepads and notepad holders, macaroni Christmas ornaments, Christmas cards, pine cone bird feeders, "duck on a dowel", decorative bulletin board tacks, stenciled recipe cards, "city on a stick", and a variety of stenciled boxes and baskets.

In addition to over $1300 of gross sales prior to December 1, 1988, teachers of TMH students are reporting an increase in the communication skills of students in the JA program and for a number of other students, an increase in self-esteem and confidence is readily seen by parents and teachers .

With such a large variety of products one might assume that the supervisors are completing

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Instructor Patty Schoff assists Cindy Mikulak in learning how to stencil pottery.

many of the work tasks. According to Patty Schoff, however, the supervisors are almost exclusively just that - supervisors. "We've tried to break down the tasks involved for each job so that the staff does virtually none of the production type work", says Schoff.

The special needs work experience coordinators from Anoka-Hennepin clearly feel that the amazing success of the program is due to the efforts of Patty Schoff. "Patty is unbelievable." says Bonnie Sovick, Coon Rapids High School. "Every time you go into that room, she's got something new going." Beth Kelly, Blaine Senior High School agrees and adds, "Even the lowest functioning students are busy and productive." Schoff is quick to down play her role but has created such a work-like atmosphere that one of the employees recently told her "you're such a good boss....you would have made a great teacher".

In fact, the positive work atmosphere was quickly noted during a recent visit by Doris Pagelkopf, Executive Director of JA. Pagelkopf was extremely pleased to see such an "upbeat work environment" with so much productive activity. Ms. Pagelkopf and her staff puchased their Christmas cards from Storefront and will send one to each CEO on the JA Board of Directors. "Storefront thoroughly impressed us" says Pagelkopf.

Apparently schools in Minnesota have created national interest in JA programs for special needs students. Pagelkopf said that at a recent national convention, the Kellogg Foundation was urging schools to develop more programs and as far as she knows Minnesota is "the only state to be utilizing this approach".

Below is a chart which highlights the other programs in existence. In addition, Groves Learning Center and Columbia Heights High School are seriously considering developing JA programs in the near future. Each of the individuals referred to in this article have readily agreed to serve as resource contacts should MVASNP members have more specific questions. Clearly, however, JA programs provide a viable alternative for special needs students who, for a variety of reasons, may be difficult to place in other vocational situations.

Storefront employee Betsy McPhail independently completes one of the tasks required for the production of an apple wreath.

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JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT
STUDENT EVALUATION

Student _____ Home School_____ Dates of Attendance_____

Supervisor _____ Grade _____ Age _____ Wages _____

Coordinator _____

Rates of Supervision Key

01 **Exceptional:** Performs task/competency with exceptional ability/independence, does not require supervision after initial instruction.
02 **Independent:** Performs task/competency with appropriate speed, occasional errors in performance/quality requires minimal supervision after initial instruction.
03 **Partial Guidance/Assistance:** Performs task/competency with periodic or additional direction or assistance (cues, prompts, partial manual guidance).
04 **Frequent Guidance/Assistance:** Performs task/competency with frequent assistance and supervision (prompts, cues, manual guidance).
05 **Dependent on Staff Exclusively:** Cannot perform this task/competency.
06 **Not Tested**

"X" = Trait applies

1. Attendance: _____

_____

2. Use of time clock/card:_____

_____

3. Punctuality
   - ____ comes in directly from bus/comes from TMH area
   - ____ puts personal supplies away before entering work area
   - ____ comes in and immediately punches IN.

4. Works cooperatively with supervisor.
   - ____ uses greeting when entering work place.
   - ____ accepts assignment willingly
   - ____ follows through on requests
   - ____ works while under supervision by staff

5. Is cooperative with co-workers when directed.
   - ____ divides work evenly
   - ____ accepts abilities/needs of others
   - ____ uses appropriate language in conversation
   - ____ willing to work with all co-workers
   - ____ easily influenced by peers

6. Requests assistance/communicates wants and needs.
   - ____ personal needs are expressed appropriately
   - ____ asks for help as needed
   - ____ asks for more work as needed
   - ____ appropriately expresses likes/dislikes of tasks
   - ____ attempts to solve task before seeking help

7. Follow directions.
   - ____ carries out tasks as given
   - ____ needs model to follow
   - ____ needs jig or modified tool
   - ____ completes tasks without supervision
   - ____ follows verbal directions

8. Accepts criticism.
   - _____ uses criticism/suggestions to improve performance
   - _____ suggestions carryover to other assigned tasks,
   - _____ uses excuses
   - _____ blames others
   - _____ becomes defensive/angry
   - _____ mumbles under breath

9. Adapts to change.
   - _____ adapts to change in routine
   - _____ adapts to change in supervision
   - _____ adapts to change in setting
   - _____ would benefit if able to offer input in decisions re: change

10. Handles materials appropriately.
   - _____ uses equipment without making unnecessary adjustments
   - _____ uses supplies without waste
   - _____ does not play with equipment or use inappropriately (spray bottles glue guns, paint)

11. Attends to task.
   - _____ works during distraction (visitors, phone, conversation)
   - _____ works well in group
   - _____ works well alone
   - _____ works without distracting others
   - _____ does not allow personal matters to interfere with work
   - _____ on task behavior s dependent on attitude toward assigned task

12. Retains work skills.
   - _____ needs verbal re-direction each time task is assigned
   - _____ needs re-demonstration each time task is assigned
   - _____ retention varies daily
   - _____ retention varies weekly

13. Work area.
   - _____ sets up work area
   - _____ keeps self-supplied with materials
   - _____ cleans up work area.

14. Grooming.
   - _____ personal hygiene
   - _____ clothing

15. Meets production standards.
   - _____ quality
   - _____ rate
   - _____ consistent work skills

16. Follows company rules.
   - _____ calls in when absent
   - _____ accepts consequences for behavior
   - _____ cashes paycheck without delay
   - _____ returns paycheck signature form
   - _____ goes to/returns from break on time
   - _____ follows safety rules

17. Keeps track of time.
   - _____ can tell time
   - _____ can pace self according to time
   - _____ can schedule work assignment according to time
   - _____ can identify specific time and use as cue for break, dismissal . . .

18. Overall level of job coach/supervisor support _____ *(see rates of supervision key on page 1)*

19. Goals for Next Report Period:_____

20. Comments:_____

When Harold "Skip" Adams first introduced Junior Achievement's high school curriculum, Applied Economics, to incarcerated youth in Portland, Ore., people were skeptical. Would a program that works with honors students help kids in the bottom two percent of academic achievement? A year later, skepticism has been replaced by enthusiasm, and the program at Picture House, a semi-secure facility for 16-to-20-year-old adjudicated males, has been acclaimed by federal justice officials.

In cities across the country, Junior Achievement's standard programs for elementary through high school students have the flexibility to be successful in classes for special needs youth. In some cases, the programs have been slightly altered, but the integrity of the Junior Achievement model remains — providing economic education and workforce skills through experiential learning and role models.

Flexible Programs Create Opportunities for Special Students

Junior Achievement's standard programs in fourth- through 12th grade are all designed to increase economic literacy among students while enhancing their ability to successfully participate in the free enterprise system. In some cases, the students taking part in the programs are studying in alternative settings or have special learning needs. The following are examples of how Junior Achievement's local affiliates are using the intrinsic flexibility of the standard programs to successfully reach these special students.

Incarcerated Youth Programs

Junior Achievement of the Columbia Empire began the Picture House program for incarcerated youth in the spring of 1990. Where other programs have failed, Picture House Director James Bowles said Junior Achievement helps the teenage male residents complete their education while preparing them for the working world. This year, as part of their Applied Economics class, the residents are operating a desktop publishing business which prints menus for local restaurants.

"I've been working with kids for 18 years and this is the best motivational tool I've ever seen. It relates to real life," said Adams.

Chris Laws, a former Picture House resident, says his Junior Achievement experience proved to him that he does have a chance to succeed. "Running a business with other Picture House residents, with help from local business consultants (volunteers), gave me the backbone, the incentive to keep going," said Laws. Today, he's working as an assistant bookkeeper at a local law publishing firm, a job he says he got because of his Junior Achievement experience. Seven other former Picture House residents who studied Applied Economics with Laws are now working, and several are going to college.

For incarcerated youth at the Ferris School for Boys in Delaware, it's Junior Achievement's traditional after-school company program that's

making a difference. In addition to learning how to produce, market and distribute a product, the Ferris School students spend time discussing business ethics. They are more interested, more involved and more open about their values than most JA Company students at the local public schools, according to discussion leader John Land, a Xerox district manager and former professional football player.

"This was probably the first time these young men gave any real thought to issues of right and wrong," said Land. "On the street, they said their friends and peers had the most influence on their values. But when I spoke to the boys individually, most of them stressed how important they think a strong family relationship should be. That's something many of them never had."

To provide more positive role models for the boys, Junior Achievement of Delaware is working on a mentorship program which would pair the boys with members of its board of directors.

Substance Abuse Programs

Junior Achievement in Atlanta, Ga., has successfully piloted a program for students undergoing substance abuse treatment at Charter Brook Hospital. Local Junior Achievement President Gerald Scott said they chose to offer The Economics of Staying in School because many of the students, ages 12 to 18, were dropouts. The four-unit program helps students understand the consequences of dropping out and can easily be taught during the 45-day treatment period.

Early Davis, personnel manager with BellSouth Mobility, has been a consultant for Junior Achievement for five years, but he says working with the kids at Charter Brook was the most rewarding Junior Achievement experience he has had. "At the end of the program, the kids were telling me why they should stay in school."

Mentally and Physically Challenged

For the past five years, Junior Achievement in Minneapolis/St. Paul has been offering JA Company programs for mentally and physically challenged students. A major underwriter of the programs, which now number 17 a year, is the Albert W. Cherne Foundation.

The students in Twin Cities area teacher Patty Schoff's classes in the Anoka/Hennepin School District are all mentally handicapped, and some are physically challenged. But last year, these high school students operated a company that produced more than 100 products, ranging from greeting cards to custom-painted craft items, and generated $15,000 in sales.

Schoff says her students are successful because she does not treat them as handicapped. "If the quality of a product they produce is inferior, I make them rework it," said Schoff. "I teach them to consider themselves as workers first, handicapped second."

As a result, many of her students in their late teens have found jobs . . . in some cases at wages comparable to able-bodied workers. "Junior Achievement has helped my kids obtain something they never had before — a paycheck and a real sense of accomplishment," said Schoff.

Incarcerated youth at Portland's Picture House operate a desktop publishing business as part of their Junior Achievement experience.

Junior Achievement in Tampa, Fla., offers programs for the hearing impaired with the support of the local Sertoma Club, a service organization that helps people with hearing disabilities. Sertoma annually provides both the volunteers and funds necessary to support five junior high-level Project Business classes for the hearing impaired. Some of the volunteers are proficient in sign language, but others communicate with the students through their teachers.

Tampa area school districts welcomed the programs, according to John Weil, president of Junior Achievement of Greater Tampa, because "the hearing impaired are often forced to rely solely on textbooks in order to learn. Junior Achievement gives them a chance to learn by doing."

At the Colorado School for the Deaf and Blind in Colorado Springs, Colo., students are learning not only by doing, but also by working together in a JA Company.

see FLEXIBLE PROGRAMS, page 11

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FLEXIBLE PROGRAMS

Rehab Counselor Gary Garrett recalled two very bright, college-bound students who held the top two positions in one of the student-run companies. To overcome their disabilities, the president, who was blind, chose a hearing impaired student as an assistant, and the VP of Finance, who was deaf, paired up with a student with some vision who knew sign language. "On their own, these students created a team that was able to do more than each of them could do alone," said Garrett.

The beauty of the Junior Achievement program, says Garrett, is that it parallels the real working world, where some are leaders, some managers and others workers, depending upon their abilities.

One of the first Junior Achievement consultants at the School for the Deaf and Blind, Sharon Adams says her managers and co-workers at Hewlett-Packard gained a greater appreciation for the contributions of the physically challenged when the students visited her job site.

The job placement rate for students at the School for the Deaf and Blind has risen from 40 percent to more than 90 percent since 1980, in large part due to the JA Company program and other community-based learning experiences it has prompted.

Akron, Ohio, Junior Achievement President David Best attributes the success of his area's JA Company program for students with multiple handicaps to a core group of dedicated volunteers who come back year after year. "Over the years, these volunteers have developed a unique sensitivity and dedication to the students," said Best. "We are particularly grateful to their employers who let the advisers spend an average of three hours each week with the students."

Junior Achievement's program for elementary age students, Business Basics, also has the flexibility to help special needs children. In Youngstown, Ohio, fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students with multiple handicaps ran their own company last year. Each student was given a job, but when they had mastered them, they asked to learn others. "These students have learned that despite their handicaps they can continue to learn, a critical skill in a changing work force," said Ginny Sheets, president of Junior Achievement of Youngstown. The students also learned how to cooperate to achieve a goal, that each worker has an important job to perform, and that quality control is critical to a business' success.

Youngstown offers the JA Company program to behaviorally handicapped high school students. Stambaugh Transitional School Principal Ron Schulay says the students are learning some very important lessons aimed at preparing them for future employment: cooperation, responsibility, tolerance and team work. "By combining academic skills into work situations, students realize that education is necessary to be competitively employed in the world of work today," said Schulay.

Students in the program have shown improvement in both academic performance and behavior. Sheets says that's because the students see themselves involved in and succeeding at something other students do. "Our special needs programs have proven to school administrators, educators and the community that Junior Achievement programs are not only of high quality, but also extremely versatile," said Sheets.

Across the country, Junior Achievement programs are still primarily offered in traditional school settings, reaching nearly 1.2 million students in more than 46,000 classrooms. But increasingly, local Junior Achievement operations are adapting programs for special audiences to meet specific community needs. As a result, Junior Achievement is helping more students participate to the best of their abilities in the nation's economy. ▲

Photo courtesy of The Terrace Area News/D'Ann White

Hearing-impaired junior high students in the Greater Tampa area study Junior Achievement's Project Business program with help from consultant Joel Robinson, Venture Realty and teacher Jane Kennett, Van Buren Junior High School.